

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 10903 241856Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----098231 241859Z /44

O 241647Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000
DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 10903

EXDIS - MIL ADDEES TREAT AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MILL, PBOR, IS, LE
SUBJECT: ISRAELS PRESS REPORT ON LEBANON (U)

REF: A. STATE 214189 B. TEL AVIV 10388 C. TEL AVIV 10900

1. IN RESPONSE TO RETEL A DATT REQUESTED A BRIEF OF IDF PERCEPTION OF THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT. THIS INFORMATION IS CURRENT AS OF 241300Z AUG 78. OVERALL ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT CONTINUES TO BE GRAVE DESPITE THE CURRENT RELATIVE LACK OF INCIDENTS.

2. SYRIANS AND CHRISTIANS GO ON HURLING ACCUSATIONS OF VIOLATIONS OF THE CEASEFIRE AND BOTH SIDES ARE SAID TO BE FORTIFYING THEIR STRATEGIC POSITIONS DURING THIS PERIOD OF QTE PHONY CALM UNQTE. HOWEVER, THE DISPOSITIONS ON THE G OUND HAVE NOT REPEAT HAVE NOT CHANGED SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF ADDITIONAL SYRIAN FORCES IN EARLY JULY. THE CURRENT SYRIAN MILITARY DISPOSITIONS WITHIN BEIRUT ARE AS FOLLOWS: TWO MECH INF BDS'S, ONE ARMORED BDE, AND FIVE COMMANDO COMMANDO BN'S. ISRAELICONCERNS ARE BASED PRIMARILY ON THE FACT THAT THE SYRIAN REINFORCEMENTS INTRODUCED INTO BEIRUT IN JULY HAVE NOT BEEN PULLED OUT AND THE BELIEF THAT ALL THE
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INGREDIENTS ARE AVAILABLE TO CREATE A QTE BIG EXPLOSION UNQTE.

3. THIS IDF ASSESSMENT REFLECTS THE ISRAELI VIEW OF SYRIAN INTENTIONS AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL B, I.E., THAT THE SYRIANS INTEND TO END THE CHRISTAINS' EFFECTIVENESS AS A POLITICAL/ MILITARY FORCE IN LEBANON. THE ONLY QUESTION IN ISRAELI MINDS IS WHEN AND HOW TACTICALLY THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED.

4. THE IDF INTEL BRIEFER ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE APPROACHING
CAMP DAVID MEETINGS MAKE THE FUTURE A PROPITIOUS TIME FOR THE
SYRIANS TO CREATE A SITUATION WHICH QTE THE IDF CAN DO VERY LITTLE
ABOUT UNQTE, AND WHICH WILL CREATE EMBARRASSMENT FOR ALL THREE
GOVERNMENTS AT THE CAMP DAVID MEETING. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH VERY LITTL
E
HAS CHANGED RECENTLY IN THE TACTICAL SITUATION ON THE GROUND, ISRAELI
ASSESSMENT PROJECTS INCREASING TENSIONS AND CLEAR POTENTIAL FOR
EVENTUAL OUTBREAK ON VIOLENCE IN THE BEIRUT AREA. THIS IDF
OVERVIEW REFLECTS, INDEED MAY BE SOURCE OF, THE THEMES CURRENTLY
BEING CARRIED IN ISRAELI MEDIA .LEWIS

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